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**Citation for published version:**

English, C, Nash, C & Martindale, R 2020, 'Exploring the coach-administrator relationship within the SA cricket development environment', *European Sport Management Quarterly*, vol. N/A, pp. 1-18.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/16184742.2020.1749689>

**Digital Object Identifier (DOI):**

[10.1080/16184742.2020.1749689](https://doi.org/10.1080/16184742.2020.1749689)

**Link:**

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

**Document Version:**

Peer reviewed version

**Published In:**

European Sport Management Quarterly

**Publisher Rights Statement:**

This is an Accepted Manuscript of an article published by Taylor & Francis in *European Sport Management Quarterly* on 6/5/2020, available online: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/16184742.2020.1749689>.

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## **Exploring the coach-administrator relationship within the SA cricket development environment**

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## **Abstract**

**Research question:** The increased competitive demands placed on modern sports organisations, intensifies pressures on coaches to produce positive results. These factors may increase relational tensions between managerial-sports leaders (administrators) and the leaders of sports teams (coaches). Few studies have explored the challenges facing coaches when leading upwards when attempting to achieve performance success. Utilising institutional logics and the concepts of trust and power, this study investigated the relationship between coaches and administrators by exploring the various interactions and negotiations involved when navigating this relationship.

**Research methods:** The views of thirteen highly experienced cricket coaches, with multi-layered coaching experiences operating in the South African cricket development environment, were recruited for semi-structured interviews, raising several significant themes.

**Results and findings :** A significant challenge to coaches were administrators exhibiting a lack of understanding of the environment required to develop cricketers, providing areas of conflict such as; perceived differences in priorities leading to non-collaborative, ill-judged and, at times biased decisions; differences in priorities affecting resource allocation to drive and sustain long-term development due short-term financial decision-making and result-driven agendas.

**Implications:** Theoretically, this research explores how institutional logics, trust and power enhance our understanding of the coach-administrator relationship and have potential research implications for understanding similar dynamic relationships in other sport organisations. Practically, one implication for sports organisations is the role and importance of developing and applying more effective coach performance management system to alleviate potential problems in these relationships.

**Keywords:** Institutional pluralism, Trust, Coach relationship, South African cricket

Word count: 8066

## **Introduction**

The rapid globalisation and commercialisation of sports have shifted sports participation and sports management from an amateur to a professional environment. The shift has increased the demands, from fans, shareholders, directors and funding bodies, on sporting organisations, creating a host of conflicting interests (Burger & Goslin, 2005) and has altered the way sports organisations are now governed. Consequently, this has created increasingly pluralistic organisations with more complex and multi-layered decision-making, presenting major issues for those responsible for their effective administration (Ferkins, Shilbury, & McDonald, 2005; Gammelsæter, 2010). Gammelsæter (2010) explains that modern commercialised sports clubs have become challenging to manage due to numerous unclear goals and ambiguous relationships. Jones and Wallace (2005) explain that the ambiguity created by divergent views from employers, executives, administrators, sponsors and coaches alike, on what constitutes achievable long and short-term goals, inevitably leads to tensions between the parties involved. These factors may exacerbate relational tensions between managerial-sports leaders (administrators) and the leaders of sports teams (coaches). Practically, there is a clear need for a functioning relationship between coach practitioners and administrators, however, whilst the contexts in which this relationship operates has become increasingly challenging there remains a lack of empirical studies illuminating the dynamics of this relationship. Consequently, this study aims to develop the literature in the area by exploring and challenging this relationship through the works of Gammelsæter (2010) and by utilising the concepts of trust and power.

## ***Theoretical framework***

A possible reason for the ambiguity and lack of clarity within many contemporary sports organisations may be due to the different dependency contradicting departments or subunits, with each accruing power differently, but all competing for the control of scarce resources

(Gammelsæter, 2010; Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). To explain the impact of dependency contradicting departments Gammelsæter (2010) proposed that modern sporting organisations are made up of seven different, but interrelated social entities or logics, *Idealist, Identity, Guild, Agency, Managerial, Regulation, and Politics*. Logic is referred to as means-ends relationships that may be both material and symbolic and legitimise the ideas, values, and beliefs of the organisation (Gammelsæter, 2010; Thornton & Ocasio, 2008).

The Guild logic acknowledges the sports department as the operating core of the organisation and is made up of people who predominantly engage in sport because they intrinsically enjoy it, such as the players and coaches. Individuals may enter the guild of sport at a young age and identify and place significant value in the continued participation in sport (Gammelsæter, 2010). Within this logic, the ‘end’ is ‘excellence and practising sport’ while the ‘means’ is reflected in the training and competition environment. In contrast, Managerialism logic involves the use of management tools to measure organisational performance-related outcomes. As such, the use of business management tools, where profitability (performance success) is the desired end, the tools used to measure success is the means. Considering the aim of this investigation, only the Guild and Managerial logics will be focused upon, however it is acknowledged that logics do depend on one another. For example, individuals from a young age enter the Guild logic and identify with being an athlete, however, due to reasons such as de-selection or injury may not be able to continue as an athlete but wish to remain in the sport and turn to coaching. Alternatively, they may leave the Guild logic and decide to become a part of the Managerial logic (Fahlen, 2006). Whilst the factors attributed to increasing organisational conflict, such as shifting resource dependencies and changing organisational boundaries may be attributed to divergent logics, (Gammelsæter, 2010), there is currently less focus on the impact these factors have on interpersonal trust and power relations.

Operating within the Guild logic, sports coaching is regarded as a social process, whereby to provide an effective environment to develop athletic performance a coach must engage with and between numerous stakeholders (athletes, support staff, parents and administrators). As part of this, trust development is a key factor, due to the interdependence, close cooperation, teamwork and level of flexibility being requirements of these environments (Salas, Sims, & Burke, 2005). Despite slight variations, trust is referred to as the belief or expectation that an individual can rely on another's good intentions (Rotter, 1980), particularly in situations where one individual is vulnerable to another (Dirks, 2000). Previously, trust has been extensively examined within an organisational context, across several theoretical perspectives (Costa, Fulmer, & Anderson, 2017). As part of this, two approaches of interest emerge. The behavioural approach considers individuals will make active choices to cooperate and that trust is a rational decision. In contrast, the psychological approaches acknowledge trust as more complex and focus on the cognitive, emotional and behavioural factors associated with fostering trust and the conditions under which distrust occurs (Lewicki, Tomlinson, & Gillespie, 2006). Focusing on interpersonal trust and grounded in the psychological approach, one such perspective is Lewicki and Bunker's 3-stage model, acknowledging trust may begin at the cognitive stage, then move to the affirmative stage as trust develops (Lewicki et al., 2006). As part of the cognitive stage, individuals will use available information concerning the trustee's competence, reliability, and dependability. Considering the importance of emotional, cognitive and behavioural factors, certain activities will support and strengthen trust relations, such as fostering collaborative cultures and being able to identify with commonly shared values and objectives, together with creating joint goals. That said, the antecedents that allow trust to flourish, the opposite constructs are thought to lead to distrust (Costa et al., 2017). The psychological and behavioural approaches explain that individuals may have an initial baseline of trust, with Lewicki et al. (2006) outlining 3 reasons leading to interpersonal distrust, 1.)

cultural or psychological factors that bias individuals towards distrust, 2.) untrustworthy reputation information, and 3.) context or situational factors warranting judgement.

When considering the limited tenure of many football managers it is feasible that many relationships between owners/directors and managers do not have time to enter the affirmative trust phase, thus remaining in the cognitive phase. Upon investigating trust between managers and owners/directors in football, Kelly and Harris (2010) found much of the distrust managers hold against owners/directors was due to their lack of sport-specific (football) knowledge and former playing experience. Whilst there remains an inconclusive relationship between manager succession and improved team performance within football, another factor that may heighten tension and distrust is the continued act of ritual scapegoating (Gamson & Scotch, 1964) by way of removing the manager after a spate of bad results. This is demonstrated by the current decrease in the length of the manager's tenures (Andersen, 2011; Gammelsæter, 2013). As such, within the competitive sport, cultural, contextual, and psychological factors may have developed that warrant football managers to inherently distrust directors/owners. A possible explanation for this may lie within category-based trust, whereby trust is influenced by information regarding members from different social groups or organisational subunits (Brewer, 1981; Kelly & Harris, 2010). The perceived categorisation of individuals into different logics or groups allows individuals to regard group outsiders as unreliable and untrustworthy. To explain this interaction further, Salancik and Pfeffer (1978) describe power within an organisation being shaped by organisational problems and policies. Power may shift to the departments or subunits that can cope with policy changes and problems. Thus, considering the results-based nature of sport and the significant focus on results, a shift in power from the Guild logic to the Managerial logic may occur, particularly during times of poor performance. This shift in power may account for owners and directors feeling they should/could affect performance and begin intervening in the duties of the manager.

Consequently, power therefore not only has the potential to align or misalign organisations with their environments (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978) it has the potential to misalign organisational subunits or logics (Gammelsæter, 2010).

What we now understand is that the current pluralistic nature of sports organisations, coupled with the shifting demands and results-based nature of sports performance, may shift power dynamics across logics, thus increasing the relational complexities between coaches and administrators, evoking feeling of distrust and promoting a ‘them and us’ culture. Critically, current research exploring the coach-administrator relationship is not only embedded in European and United Kingdom football and North American sports such as baseball and basketball, but it also focuses more broadly on trust and distrust (Dirks, 2000; Kelly and Harris, 2010). Subsequently, the aim is to not only investigate a sporting culture not previously considered but also one that has undergone changes and challenges for coaches and administrators. One such environment offering useful insight is that of South African (SA) cricket

### ***The environment***

Since readmission to full membership of the International Cricket Council (ICC) 10<sup>th</sup> July 1991 (Gemmell, 2004), South African cricket has undergone several changes relating not only to the structure of the playing and development environment (English, Nash, & Martindale, 2018) but also its governance structures (Louw, 2010). In 2003 policy-makers controlling South African cricket, the General Council voted to radically cut the number of provincial teams making up the professional domestic competition from 11 and grouping them by region, into 6 franchises (English et al., 2018; Louw, 2010). At the same time, the semi-professional/amateur competition also underwent restructuring, increasing the number of provincial (or affiliates) teams from 11 to 16. Up until this point all cricket in SA had been played under a provincial competition structure, however with the inception of the franchise and the de-



institutionalisation (O'Brein & Slack, 1999) of provincialism, cricket at elite domestic level was now to be played under a new identity. Importantly, the competition structure beneath the elite franchise level would remain provincial with each province (now called affiliate due to the connection with a franchise) running separate schools and amateur club and university competitions. Cricket South Africa's (CSA) Long-Term Participation Development (LTPD) Programme, from Grassroots to Proteas (Ferreira, 2011), confirms the cricket player development pathway, with players being introduced to the game at grassroots level via the mini-cricket programme then progressing to youth and schools' cricket. Youth (provincial/affiliate) and school cricket produce senior-level cricketers who may be involved in a club, university, academy, and provincial/affiliate level cricket. At the elite domestic level, below the national team (Proteas), are the franchise and high-performance programmes. The decision to reduce the number of provincial/affiliate teams was not only due to running costs, but it was also to close the gap between elite domestic and international cricket, thus futureproofing the performance of the national team (Louw, 2010). The rationale underpinning this decision was met with scepticism from players, coaches and administrators alike (English et al., 2018) as the new provincial/affiliate structure was perceived to be costlier than the original model.

Alongside the changes made to the playing structure, following an inquiry into the financial activities of the then United Cricket Board (UCB now CSA) Chief Executive Officer (CEO) no written policies or procedures relating to the financial affairs of the board were evident. This investigation, alongside other general allegations of mismanagement, poor governance and general incompetence involved in the governance of various national sports organisations, prompted a call for sports administrators to sign up to the principles and procedures of good governance and practices (Louw, 2010). Since the issues associated with a structural change to both the athletic and coach development environments (English et al.,

2018), together with drivers for changing governance structures, the cricket playing environment in SA has undergone considerable change whereby the decisions and the behaviours of its administrators have been questioned. As such, this study aims to investigate the broad reality of the relationship between coach and administrator, within a SA cricket context, by exploring the perceptions of the coach and the various interactions and negotiations involved in navigating this relationship.

## **Method**

### ***Design***

A pragmatic approach was adopted to deliver the aim of this study, due to pragmatism recognising the importance of past and current social, historical and political positions and how they may influence the scientific process. Also, pragmatism is concerned with solving real-world problems and stresses the importance of evaluating research findings based on their practical, social and moral consequences, as well as their effect on the human condition (Giacobbi, Jr., Poczwadowski, & Hager, 2005). Considering the importance of participant perceptions and the explorative nature of this research, a qualitative methodology was deemed the most appropriate form of data collection (Cruickshank & Collins, 2015). A semi-structured interview procedure, with broad and open-ended questions, was followed due to both the structure and flexibility it allowed in capturing an in-depth and meaningful insight into the nature of this relationship (Nash, Sproule, & Horton, 2011).

### ***Participants***

Coaches who had experience working as head coaches across different contexts for over 10 years were purposefully selected for interview (Patton, 1990). The objective behind this inclusion criteria was an attempt to capture the broad perspective from individuals who had gathered diverse experiences across multiple contexts to better understand the different

relational interactions between coaches and administrators. To provide a current perspective of this relationship, participants were also required to be working in their current coaching role for a minimum of two years. The structured coaching outlets comprise school and university environments, amateur and semi-professional environments which include club and provincial/affiliate cricket and professional which includes franchise. All environments form part of the CSA LTPD Programme (Ferreira, 2011) administered by CSA.

The sample consisted of 13 participants of which included 11 ( $n=11$ ) current coaches, one ( $n=1$ ) coach educator and one ( $n=1$ ) coach mentor. All identified participants were male and had over 10 years (averaging 14.2 years) of experience as SA domestic cricket coaches. Four of the coaches identified were currently operating in the amateur cricket leagues (school/club/university), five coaches were operating within the provincial environment (semi-professional/professional), while two coaches were operating at the franchise level (professional), together with one coach educator and one coach mentor. All the coaches had experience in multiple contexts, for example, participant 13, who, at the time was operating as a provincial coach, had also gathered previous experience at a national and international level.

### ***Procedure***

Before individuals were identified for an interview, all procedures were pre-approved by the university's ethics committee. As each identified coach was still currently operating within the SA cricket environment and considering the potential ethical nature of this investigation, assurances were provided that every effort would be made to protect the anonymity of each coach and no organisation or bodies the coaches were employed by would have access to the recorded information (Veal & Darcy, 2014). In attempting to capture a broad perspective, primary questions covered four broad areas; the role of the coach, coherency across development environments, the practice environment and shared goals. Each primary question

was explored in more detail by way of prompts and probes (Patton, 1990). Interviews were conducted once and averaged 43 minutes and were audio-recorded for later transcription.

### ***Data analysis***

Inductive thematic analysis, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), was adopted to analyse this complex and contextualised relationship. The initial stage of the inductive process was to fully transcribe and become familiar with the data corpus by way of multiple readings. The second stage was to generate codes across the data set, followed by grouping the data into categories. In attempting to interpret the latent content of the data, the second stage of the theme review involved checking the coded extracts to confirm coherent patterns of meaning and reviewing the entire data set for a consistent message across all the themes. Due to the inductive nature of the study themes were then named and arranged to present the findings that emerged from the data. Thereafter, theoretical reference was applied to the newly arranged findings.

### ***Trustworthiness and credibility***

The pragmatic process stresses the importance of answering practical problems (Giacobbi et al., 2005). As such, the iterative process adopted when reviewing the aim of the research, methods, and data were consistently aligned to the outcomes of pragmatic philosophy. Alongside data triangulation (Patton, 1990) investigator triangulation was also utilised to strengthen (Skinner, Edwards, & Corbet, 2015) then the study by utilising peer debriefing during the different stages of the data analysis procedure and by using the expertise of a critical friend with 15 years of experience in qualitative research. The critical friend assisted in establishing trustworthiness, specifically when themes were reviewed against the coded data and categories, and then against the entire data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Finally, member checking was also employed to confirm the accuracy and balance of responses, however, no changes were made to any quotes because of this process (Morse & McEvoy, 2014)

## Results

The following section presents the final higher and lower order theme formation following a full review of the coded extracts which are represented below in Table 1.

[insert table 1 here]

### *Clarity of roles and decision-making*

#### *Relationships and role understanding*

To support the interests of the players and provide more objectivity to performances and results, several coaches perceived it important to put the players first and not results, and in so doing position themselves between the players and the administrators. This provides some insight into the different perceptions between coaches and administrators, with administrators more interested in the objective than subjective assessments of performances. It was believed this difference created tensions between the two groups when consensus was not achieved.

And also the buffer that the coach is between the playing side and the administrative side is a critical one as well. I have always been one to put the players first. I was always a players' coach in that respect. It didn't make me popular with the administrators, certainly because I didn't necessarily tell them things that they wanted to hear. (Coach 11)

To achieve success within the amateur club environment there is a perception that the coach is required to not only coach but undertake numerous roles, particularly if other individuals in the club do not fulfill their administrative commitments.

I took control over many other things, because we weren't getting much support and at (name of university) there is a committee which is elected but the committee, two out of six of them pull their finger out and do a bit of work but a lot of the work will actually fall on my plate. I will do recruiting of players, I will communicate with players who

want to come to university. I will try and get better sponsorships and if guys weren't accepted I will be getting the head of sport to ensure that they do get accepted with maybe a covering letter or a little bit more power. So I have had to take on quite a lot of admin, not only just coaching. (Coach 8)

There was also the general perception from all the coaches that, on occasions, individuals who hold administrative positions are having an effect on areas out with their role (e.g. team selection), while at the same time not having the required knowledge to do so.

If you are the CEO and you oversee things, you shouldn't be picking teams. You can ask questions, and I will give you the right answers, but I do believe I have got more knowledge than you to make those decisions. And can make the correct decisions. (Coach 9)

Several coaches commented that, in general, coaches are not normally included in important decision-making processes and that the relationship between coach and administrator lacks collaboration, especially with regards to those decisions that may enhance or impact on their coaching environment.

I mean, just a simple example. The indoor facility, not the franchise coach or the provincial coach was at any stage asked 'what are your needs here, what do you guys recommend, what have you seen at other unions, what have you seen overseas that we could bring in to the plans so as to have the best possible indoor facility at the right price?' Not a question was asked. We have got guys sitting in the office who want to make decisions on teams, but I work with the guys every day. I can see which guy has done his off-season programme. I can see which guy is dedicated, wants to go further. And yet these guys will overrule and pick teams. (Coach 9)

*Competence, bias and decision-making power: lack of coach control*

There was a consensus across all coaches that questioned the decision-making capabilities and competence of the administrators. This perception corroborates past decisions to include independent members on the board to reduce biased and incorrect decision-making.

You just have to look at what is happening at Cricket SA. It is exactly that. That is why the Nicholson Commission said 'let's get independent guys on the board, to prevent us from making the wrong decisions and biased decisions, decisions for the wrong reasons. (Coach 9)

Further questions were raised by the majority of coaches concerning the ability of certain individuals at board level to fulfill their role adequately, mainly due to a lack of understanding.

It is a governance issue. Elected members can't run a professional set up. They can sit like a chair of a board but that board is made up of people who don't understand what is going on. (Coach 7)

Certain constraints the coaches operating at the provincial and franchise level were highlighted, specifically around the area of financial resource allocation and competent decision-making. It was considered important that coaches, due to their performance being evaluated, be provided autonomy and be trusted to administer all matters relating to their coaching environment.

I still feel that your coach should be trusted to run the whole thing in its entirety. He should be given his budget and he must run all matters cricket and your CEO must be your business side of things. There aren't too many barriers, just financially and just your administrators, trying to get through to them. Because you are still Board driven. There are still a few clowns that sit every month for four hours where they eat for two hours and then they discuss your abilities as a coach and depending on how your season

has gone. I mean I went from being the best coach in the country in one month to be the worst coach and getting fired. I must make sure that the same thing doesn't happen to other coaches. (Coach 11)

### ***Disconnected agendas***

#### *Differences in perception of the nature of development*

Divergent agendas and a disconnect between coaches and administrators were perceived, specifically to financial decision-making and the complexity surrounding player development.

The administrators are on a different bus. They come from a different angle. They look at numbers, they look at completely different things. They look at budgets, they don't think of the importance of trying to develop that cricketer. To try and give him every little bit so that he can perform at his very best when he plays. So I don't think that administrators see eye to eye with the coaches. (Coach 3)

A lack of consideration was highlighted by the most experienced coaches and coach mentor, specifically as to how long it takes to develop success. Administrators were perceived to view development as short term in nature, with an expectation that results should be achievable over a short period.

As much as the guys say 'come on you have got to start building' the guys won't tell you the next bit. Let's put a system in place, let's see what we can do...No, no, you get signed as a coach and immediate results! People want immediate results. It is all about results. Guys can tell you whatever they want, they want to win and I know. I have seen coaches come and go like it is going out of fashion. (Coach 13)

A culture of expecting immediate results was perceived by all the coaches to underpin a short-term approach to development. The expectation of immediate results was deemed to be most problematic for those coaches working at the domestic-elite level (franchise) and was



considered unhelpful for those coaches operating at the development levels (youth/school/university/affiliate) due to being counter-productive to long-term development programmes.

I was there, (a) new coach came in, he didn't last three years because of whatever, (name of the coach) is in there now, (if) it doesn't go his way, someone else will be in. There is no real-time for proper development so to speak, and for the coach to put his stamp on things. Whether the right coaches are appointed, that is another discussion. Our focus is so much on instant gratification and unfortunately it is what it is at first-class level. (Coach 11)

#### *A results-driven process*

Several coaches, specifically the coach mentor and educator, described a lack of alignment between what is expected to fund and drive a successful development program and the role the coach plays in the process. Interestingly, similar to comments outlined in the previous lower-order theme, a result-driven process was also described by some to be prevalent at the school level.

I have got to say if you are talking about people that I report to, I don't know how much they understand about coaching. I think it is very open to discussion. And exactly how much support our coaches get from an administrative point of view, I am talking about the school coach, the headmaster is, at the end of the day, he is interested in one or two things. I think a lot of schools pride themselves on producing players but they are probably only going to judge the coach on results. (Coach 2)

As previously explained, it was considered important for administrators to understand the, at times, the subjective nature of coach performances. As a result, the lack of

acknowledgment and understanding of the broader performance context places coaches under pressure to perform and obtain positive results in an unrealistic time frame.

Sometimes coaches walk into a system that is set, there are good administration and players. They walk into a system that there are good teams, and sometimes good coaches will achieve a lot with regards to results and trophies and those types of things, and they might not be the best coaches at the end of the day because of the resources they have to their disposal. They have got all the resources, and administrators, especially at board level, to be blunt...and I don't want to generalise but some of them probably have never played the game or some of them, are maybe there for other reasons, whatever the case may be. But I think sometimes for them it is a simple case of winning and losing, (they forget) that you have got to take a lot of other factors into consideration and sometimes there is a bit of ignorance in that regard. (Coach 10)

Differences in the perception of what measures successful coach performances were outlined by the majority of coaches. As a consequence, the ambiguity and complexity surrounding coaching practice were revealed when the performances of a coach at the development level are measured by winning games, rather than providing the environment for more players to be successful and progress to domestic-elite and national level.

As a coach, yes, I want to be successful and your successes are being measured by the number of games you win, unfortunately. Whereas in terms of the development of a player, if I can have a losing side and I know I am going to get three players to go through and play franchise cricket, then I am successful. That is my understanding (Coach 3)

The impact of administrators focusing on short-term performances, as a measure of coach success, places the coach in an indefensible position if results are poor, with the majority

of coaches operating at the domestic-elite level perceiving the coach to be expendable when compared to players.

I certainly believe, as a coach that you are at the bottom of the pecking order. There are the administrators, the player, and the coach. From my personal experience, I don't think the administrators in particular fully understand the pressures and the problems that a coach has. They are very quick to talk to you when you are doing well, but when you are not doing well, the phone doesn't ring. When your team is struggling it is a lonely place. And I think (name) in (name of region) was one of the few administrators that understood the difficulties that go around when...teams can't always win. There has to be a loser. When the team underperforms it is a poor coach. When the team wins, it is a great team. The football mentality has got into cricket more and more. If the team has a bad season the coach is under pressure. (Coach 6)

*Player selection: Not singing from the same hymn sheet*

The challenging relationship between administrator and coach was revealed by coaches at the domestic-elite level due to differing views involving player selection. Coaches were perceived to take into account numerous variables when selecting a player, while administrators may follow a more self-preserving and conflicting agenda.

We have got some guys on the board who don't watch club cricket. They just come down and make their own rules. 'Why is this one not playing? Why is that one not playing?' As far as selection is concerned with the criterion...we follow the criterion and we look at everyone who has performed at club level, we look at the whole scenario and if you fit into the team...but obviously board members don't see eye to eye with each other and sometimes self-interest, self-interest in clubs comes in. (Coach 13)

The challenges of operating under unclear and contradictory agendas were raised by the majority of coaches, adding to the ambiguity between the coach's development role and expected performance outcomes.

At some of the unions, they say that winning isn't everything, they want you to develop players. So what they are saying is 'there is a guy with potential but he is maybe not there yet, we need you to play him and give him some experience, although it means that we might lose one or two games. Although they try and say that their emphasis is on new players I think it is a lot more on actually winning. And I get told that my job gets measured by the number of players I bring through, but I believe when things don't go as it should, they'll quickly refer to decisions, and how you have done in previous seasons. I went into a franchise meeting when (name) left, and the first question was asked me was 'why if (name) won trophies in the last two years, and you haven't won a trophy, why should we employ you? So winning still is important. They can say whatever they like. (Coach 9)

### *Allocation of resources*

Whilst it was described that some coaches operating at the domestic-elite level can demand resources and support, the level of support and resources provided differs, not only across regions but also on the coach's contractual position within the organisation.

In some unions a franchise coach will come in and say 'this is what I want, this is my support staff' and they will give it him. I don't think in our case, the (name of the province), that is necessarily what has happened. I think there it is 50/50, 50% is what the coach wants and 50% is what the administrators...in my case, not being on a contract basis, but a full-time basis as part of your amateur structures, you are almost on more of a 70/30 split. Seventy percent of administrators and thirty percent of what I want. I am on a full-time contract so I suppose you are working for someone and if that is what

the board wants, then that is what the board want and you have to almost go with that.

Budget constraints are a huge problem. (Coach 9)

The majority of coaches described the challenges they face when their performance was evaluated and their wider operational contexts not considered. For example, the levels of resources available to coaches did not seem to be considered when attempting to produce winning performances. Rather, coaches were being placed under pressure and evaluated only in terms of the results produced, irrespective of the resources at their disposal.

I see a lot of coaches working, good coaches, but they might not have all resources and they might be doing well with what they have compared to other folks that maybe, player resources might have it all and they might not be all that good coaches. There is a lot of pressure on coaches. As I said, you are evaluated based on results .....It is easy for people to not know what is happening out there, who don't know what you are working with, to make decisions on your future based on that. (Coach 10)

### ***Creating coach boundaries***

#### *Providing greater coach security*

A significant number of the coaches explained they felt underappreciated and were first to be blamed for the underperformance of their team, leading to feelings of scepticism and distrust. In response, the formation of a coaches union to provide support for the coaches was advocated.

Coaches are skeptical. We operate in a system of mistrust and distrust. Where coaches don't feel appreciated. There are moves afoot, they approached me a couple of years ago to try and start a coaches union, pretty much like the players union. It is a very difficult thing to get off the ground because you don't have the numbers but coaches feel...they are the armpit of the system. If anybody gets fired it is the coach. (Coach 11)

Whilst the differences in protection between those coaches operating on a contractual basis at the domestic elite level (franchise) and those operating on a full-time basis was explained by a few coaches, the reality of performance pressures was acknowledged and accepted when operating at the elite level. It was explained that this pressure is exacerbated by the lack of understanding displayed by those administrators, making the environment more challenging.

I am a Level 4 coach myself, I have coached at the provincial level, I have coached...assisted at franchise level, but I do not envy coaches working in those positions. I look at people like (name of franchise coach) and I think to myself, and it is contractual based positions, I would rather be doing what I am doing at the moment, in a permanent position and enjoy what I am doing instead of sitting with the pressures. The pressure comes with the job, but once people are ignorant and they don't understand what you are working with makes it so much more difficult at the end of the day. (Coach 10)

*Creating the appropriate culture: Building relationships and effective communication*

The importance of administrators being proactive rather than reactive when providing support for players and coaches was raised by several coaches. Notably, a cooperative relationship between the coach and administrator was emphasised as crucial for operations to run smoothly.

But to be honest with you the administrators are coming to the party late. They are getting there slowly because they realise without the players and the coaches that they are not going to be successful in what they are doing. So the relationship between coach and administrator must be a good one. Recently I have had an experience where coach and administrator didn't see eye to eye and everything just fell apart. So I think that it is important that those two parts of the organisation must be spot on. (Coach 3)

The success of the players was described by the more experienced coaches to be of mutual benefit to both coach and administrator, however, a cooperative and supportive approach from administrators was not perceived to be in place, but rather one that was more criticising and antagonistic.

My role in (name of country), I felt the administration side wasn't good. You are thrown into the situation, which you are quite happy to deal with but when you do need a bit of backup from the administration it is not there, or it is always an antagonistic role rather than a supportive role. You are kind of caught in the middle between two parties, who are fighting against each other but you need to get the best out of your players for both parties to progress. It is a bit of a middleman situation. You are kind of doing what you believe is best with very limited resources. It would be nice if the admin can give you the right to go practice what you believe, your philosophy. Give you that freedom to go and do it. Backing you up rather than criticising. (Coach 1)

The importance of educating and supporting the administrators to reduce the ambiguity that encompasses the coaches' role was emphasised by the coach mentor. In so doing, this may not only provide the coaches with some level of added support but also assist the administrators in making more informed and fair decisions with regards to a coach's appointment, evaluation or dismissal.

Educating administrators as well..... (and) for them to understand that one, we have got good coaches and let's appoint the right ones. That is where I see my role. Educating, but also being that voice for the coach when he needs the voice. Being alongside him when the shit hits the fan, to be up there with him and say 'you have actually cocked this up' or if something becomes available, get in there and say 'guys we have got someone locally that we can take a punt on'. Try and assist, not only with the coaches but to sit in with the administrators. I try and tackle the whole thing. (Coach 11)

## Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between SA cricket coaches and administrators, by exploring the perceptions of coaches, in the hope of recognising the various interactions and challenges coaches face when attempting to provide an effective development environment.

Findings resonate with Salancik & Pfeffer's (1978) strategic-contingency model of power which describes power not depending on individuals, but rather on the types of activities under control. As such, power is dependent on situations and contexts but also on the existence of others who can assist in desirable outcomes being achieved. For example, due to the results-based nature of sports organisations, coaches may begin their tenures holding some power due to the perception they can achieve desired outcomes and add to the critical resources of the organisation. This was evidenced when a coach referred to never hearing from administrators when they were winning, but this changing when they began losing. Notwithstanding the impact of poor results on power relations between coaches and administrators, it is the activities associated with the Managerial logic that transfers power to the administrators who have the capacity, by logic definition, to evaluate performance and utilise tools to achieve desired organisational outcomes.

Contextually, the strategies administrators utilised within this study support those found by Kelly and Harris (2010) and was evidenced by those coaches operating within the professional and semi-professional environments. These coaches spoke of interference from administrators, particularly concerning team selection. They were also prone to facing issues regarding a lack of collaboration and ambiguous goals, particularly within the areas of long-term player development versus results. Interestingly, this power was perceived by the coaches not to be supported by competence, based on a lack of knowledge of the game.



Earlier work by Lewicki, McAllister, and Bies (1998) conceptualise distrust and trust as two separate constructs, whereby trust focuses on possible undesirable future behaviour whereas distrust focuses on the probability of undesirable behaviour and thus forces the individual to take preventative or defensive action (Costa et al., 2017). Such undesirable behaviour may operationalise distrust by the trustor due to a perceived lack of competence in the trustee. These defensive actions are reflected in the comments of one coach who referred to his board members as '*clowns*' for having little understanding of the game but having the power to make decisions on his performance as a coach. When considering the importance of experience to knowledge formation it is evident that tacit knowledge contributes to both the development of coach knowledge (Nash & Collins, 2006) and dominant logic formation (Gammelsaeter, 2010). In the context of this study, it is unsurprising a misalignment exists between logics because administrators were deemed to have had little to no experience within the game of cricket to draw upon to make informed decisions.

However, a note of caution is required due to contradictory findings within the literature. For example, Fahlen (2006) explains the importance of individuals having previous athletic experience before taking up an administrative position within ice hockey, while the participants holding administrator roles were highlighted by English et al. (2018) as having gathered significant experiences as cricket players. A possible explanation for this may be, the commercial mindset within the managerial logic influencing the values and ideological views of new members (Gammelsaeter, 2010), whereby assimilation to the new dominant group logic becomes inevitable. Therefore, due to differences across logics, administrator intentions may always be treated with suspicion, irrespective of sporting experiences. Importantly, the difference in knowledge formation may also exacerbate other issues raised. For example, the potential for poor coach evaluation increases, due to some administrators being motivated by a short-term, results-driven approach over long-term development. This short-term approach

may not allow coaches to fully implement their philosophies or vision and can lead to greater ambiguity and distrust between logics.

Following the review of several models of trust, Lewicki, Tomlinson, & Gillespie (2006 p.1014) define trust as involving ‘positive or confident expectations about another party’ and the ‘willingness to accept vulnerability in the relationship under conditions of interdependence and risk’. The associated performance-related contexts administrators and coaches operate within are not conducive to develop positive and confident expectations, thus relationships across logics may be low in interdependence and laden with risk, making opportunities to develop a trusting relationship challenging.

Findings confirm the risk-laden nature of this relationship by describing the precarious position coaches may find themselves in, especially concerning job security. The feature of job security is not unique to the SA cricket-coaching environment, with Lara-Bercial and Mallet (2016) highlighting the general acceptance of the risks associated with performance-level coaching. Whilst, in reality, the position of a high-performance coach cannot be assured, a mechanism to uncover the true performance (objectively and subjectively) should be. O’Boyle (2014) explains that effective individual performance management systems are not embedded in the culture of sports organisations in the same way as they are in traditional business. Methods to evaluate the performance of elite coaches are not well represented in the literature, however, Mallet and Côté (2006) offer a 3-step athlete-focused feedback method to coach evaluation by utilising instruments such as the Coach Behaviour Scale for Sport (CBS-S). Importantly, the athlete is only one avenue to obtain feedback, with O’Boyle (2014) suggesting the use of a 360-degree feedback tool, by using various raters (support staff, peers, parents, athletes, and administrators) to provide feedback on the coach's performance across several measures. Though the mechanisms used to evaluate coach performance was not the focus of this study, the application of an individual performance management system that best measures

the true performance of the coach (Mallet & Côté, 2006; O'Boyle, 2014) may offer a solution to some of the issues highlighted. As the managerial logic is concerned with utilising the tools to measure performance, utilising the correct tool such as the 360 review may foster collaboration and opportunities for communication across logics, thus increasing the opportunity to develop affirmative-based trust through transparency and accountability. Whilst a relevant assessment tool provides an opportunity to develop the psychological factors surrounding trust, consideration is required to the structure and function of the individual performance system. As proposed by O'Boyle (2014), the assessment tool should not only consider objective measures (win/loss record) it should also consider the more subjective or external factors (resources available/injury/illness to team members) that may affect a team's performance, factors a coach has little or no control over. Whilst evaluation tools take time to administer, the reality is high-performance coaches may be dismissed at short notice (Cruickshank & Collins, 2012). As such, administrators should also be proactive and not reactive in its implementation and in this way performance evaluation should provide the opportunity to inform future practice and not only consider past results. To develop a level of trust between the Guild and Managerial logic the individual performance evaluation must be timeously implemented, impartial and unbiased. It should also consider feedback from multiple raters and be administered by a separate section of the organisation that is responsible for managing and developing its human resources. Broadly speaking, providing an appropriate performance management system could promote open communication and collaborative cultures across the two institutional logics (Gammelsæter, 2010). By doing so may foster the non-linear cyclical approach proposed by Gilmore and Gilson (2007), especially when organisational and performance goals are ambiguous. Once organisational and managerial-level performance parameters are established, trust can then be vested in the coach to fulfill their duties with less interference.

### ***Future direction***

Whilst multiple logics may create fragmentation and conflict, institutional pluralism does allow an organisation to meet expectations on several fronts (Gammelsæter, 2010), as such, further work is required in this area. For example, this study has not considered the importance and effect of other logics on the relationship, such as the Regulation and Politics logic. Similar to the Bosman-verdict, SA cricket is under significant pressure following the Kolpak ruling, whereby European Union labour rights are afforded to SA cricketers. This led to some high profile cricketers leaving the SA cricket environment to play within the English County competition (English et al., 2018). Additionally, CSA has aligned itself to the SA Transformation Charter, pledging to select a certain number of players of colour within domestic and international teams. These factors were outwith the scope of this study, however, are areas that could be explored in more detail via the lense of institutional logics (Gammelsaeter, 2010). However, for this area to receive attention and for effective change to occur, further research is required from the perspective of administrators and across different sports and sporting cultures.

### ***Conclusion***

As Lewicki et al. (2006) highlight, many studies only offer snapshots of trust-based situations due to the difficulties of measuring trust, however this study does highlight the complexity created by misalignment between goals, values, and ideologies leading to differences in trust and power between coaches and administrators (Thompson, Potrac, Jones, & 2015). It also assists coaches to make sense of operating upwards and offers possible solutions to building trust and negotiating potential conflict and challenge. Importantly, adopting a multidirectional approach identifies coaches being vulnerable to differences in conflicting ideologies and goals between individuals (Thompson et al., 2015) and acknowledges the importance of coaches

developing socio-political awareness and micro-political understanding of the coaching environment (Cruickshank & Collins, 2015).

### **Disclosure statement**

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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